

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

A complete listing of the claims is provided below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A retaining ring movable between an unyielded state and a yielded state, comprising:

a generally C-shaped region having an inner peripheral surface; an outer peripheral surface; a first end; and a second end,

wherein said retaining ring is formed from a yieldable material that has little or no shape memory that yields when moved from the unyielded state to the yielded state.

2. (Original) The retaining ring according to claim 1, further comprising a first leg extending from said first end.

3. (Original) The retaining ring according to claim 2, further comprising a second leg extending from said second end.

4. (Original) The retaining ring according to claim 1, wherein said C-shaped portion is a curve that is circular in shape.

5. (Original) The retaining ring according to claim 3, wherein each of said legs further comprise a respective termination portion.

6. (Original) The retaining ring according to claim 5, wherein said termination portion of said first leg further comprises a tool receiving region and said termination portion of said second leg further comprises a tool receiving region.

7. (Original) The retaining ring according to claim 6, wherein said tool receiving region is one of a slot, a hole and/or a dimple.

8. (Original) The retaining ring according to claim 1, wherein said ring is constructed from a ductile material.

9. (Original) The retaining ring according to claim 8, wherein said ductile material is non-work-hardened stainless steel.

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(cont)
10. (Original) The retaining ring according to claim 1, further comprising a first finger projecting from said inner peripheral surface.

11. (Original) The retaining ring according to claim 1, further comprising four fingers projecting from said inner peripheral surface.

12. (Previously Presented) The retaining ring according to claim 3, wherein said first and second legs are substantially straight and point toward each other in the unyielded state.

13 / 14. (Currently Amended) A method for retaining an inner component within an outer component using a retaining ring comprising:

twisting the retaining ring in first direction using a tool, reducing the diameter of the ring and causing the ring to yield into a yielded state;

aligning the retaining ring with a groove in the outer component; and

twisting the retaining ring in second direction opposite to the first direction using the tool, increasing the diameter of the ring and causing the ring to yield into an unyielded state,

wherein the retaining ring is formed from a yieldable material that has little or no shape memory.

14 / 15. (Original) The method according to claim 14, wherein the retaining ring is formed from a ductile material.

15 / 16. (Original) The method according to claim 15, wherein the ductile material is non-work hardened stainless steel.

16 / 17. (Original) The method according to claim 14, comprising:
inserting the tool into tool receiving portions of the legs before the first twisting step; and
removing the tool from tool receiving portions of the legs after the second twisting step.

17 / 18. (Currently Amended) A method for retaining an inner component within an outer housing using a retaining ring comprising:

moving the ring from a first, unyielded state, to a second, yielded state by rotating a tool engaged with opposed legs of the ring;

aligning the retaining ring with a groove in the housing; and
moving the ring from the second, yielded state into the first, unyielded state by rotating the tool engaged with the legs of the ring,

wherein the first step of moving the ring from the first state to the second state causes the material of the ring to yield, and wherein the second step of moving the ring from the second state to the first state also causes the material to yield and wherein the retaining ring is formed from a yieldable material that has little or no shape memory.

¹⁸ 19. (Original) The method according to claim ¹⁷ 18, wherein the retaining ring is formed from a ductile material.

¹⁹ 20. (Original) The method according to claim ¹⁷ 18, wherein the ductile material is non work hardened stainless steel.

²⁰ 21. (Currently Amended) A retaining ring movable between an unyielded state and a yielded state, comprising:

a generally C-shaped region having an inner peripheral surface, an outer peripheral surface, a first end; and a second end, said retaining ring being formed from a yieldable material that has little or no shape memory that yields when moved from the unyielded state to the yielded state; and

a first leg extending from said first end and having first tool receiving means for

receiving a tool; and

a second leg extending from said second end and having second tool receiving means for receiving a tool.

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22. (New) A retaining ring having a diameter, movable between a first, expanded configuration and a second, contracted configuration, comprising:

a generally C-shaped region having an inner peripheral surface; an outer peripheral surface; a first end; a second end; and said C-shaped region being substantially circularly curved about a center point, wherein said generally C-shaped portion has a first radial width between said inner peripheral surface and said outer peripheral surface;

a first leg that extends from said first end, having a second width greater than the first width, wherein said first leg comprises a first tool receiving region, said first tool receiving region oriented a first distance from said center point when the ring is in the first, expanded configuration;

a second leg that extends from said second end, also having said second width, wherein said second leg comprises a second tool receiving region and generally opposes said first tool receiving region, said second tool receiving region oriented also said first distance from said center point when the ring is in the first, expanded configuration; and

at least two fingers projecting from said inner peripheral surface,

wherein said generally C-shaped region has little or no shape memory and yields when a first force is applied, deforming the retaining ring from the first configuration, to the second configuration, wherein in the second, contracted configuration said first tool receiving portion

translates to be located a distance further from said center point and wherein said second tool receiving portion translates to be located a distance closer to said center point, and

wherein said generally C-shaped region also yields when a second, opposite force

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(continued) is applied deforming the retaining ring from the second, contracted configuration back to the first, expanded configuration.
